

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 9, 2017

The Honorable James Mattis
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1400

Secretary Mattis,

I am contacting you regarding the ongoing contamination of public and private drinking water wells near the former Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster, the former Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Horsham, as well as the Horsham Air Guard Station in Pennsylvania. As you know, Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) have been detected in public water systems above the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established Lifetime Health Advisory levels. In response to this contamination, public and private drinking water wells around these military bases in Horsham, Warrington and Warminster have been shut down and many of my constituents have been forced to discontinue use of their private well and connect to public water sources.

Through the investigative work of a local newspaper in my district, it has come to my attention that the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) had information concerning the possible adverse environmental and health effects stemming from the use of firefighting foams on military bases, over a decade before the public was made aware of these concerns. According to minutes of a 2001 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Foam Committee meeting, a letter written by the Under Secretary of Defense was read that described the fluorocarbon surfactants (PFCs) in the Aqueous Film-Forming Foam used by the military to fight certain classes of fires as 'persistent, bioaccumulating and toxic.' Furthermore, these minutes describe a '...March 16, 2001 meeting at DoD to discuss what actions they should take...' related to PFCs. Enclosed is a copy of the 2001 NFPA Foam Committee Meeting.

If these minutes accurately captured the content of the 2001 NFPA meeting, they show that DoD was aware of problems regarding the use of PFC-based firefighting foams long before any effort was made to discontinue their use or protect the public, in places like Horsham, Warminster, and Warrington, from further exposure. In response to the revelation of this information, I respectfully request a copy of the letter from the Under Secretary of Defense referenced in the minutes, any additional information from 2001 that explains DoD's understanding of the 'persistent, bioaccumulating and toxic' nature of PFCs, and further details regarding the March 16, 2001 meeting at DoD related to PFCs.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress



Brendan Boyle
Member of Congress